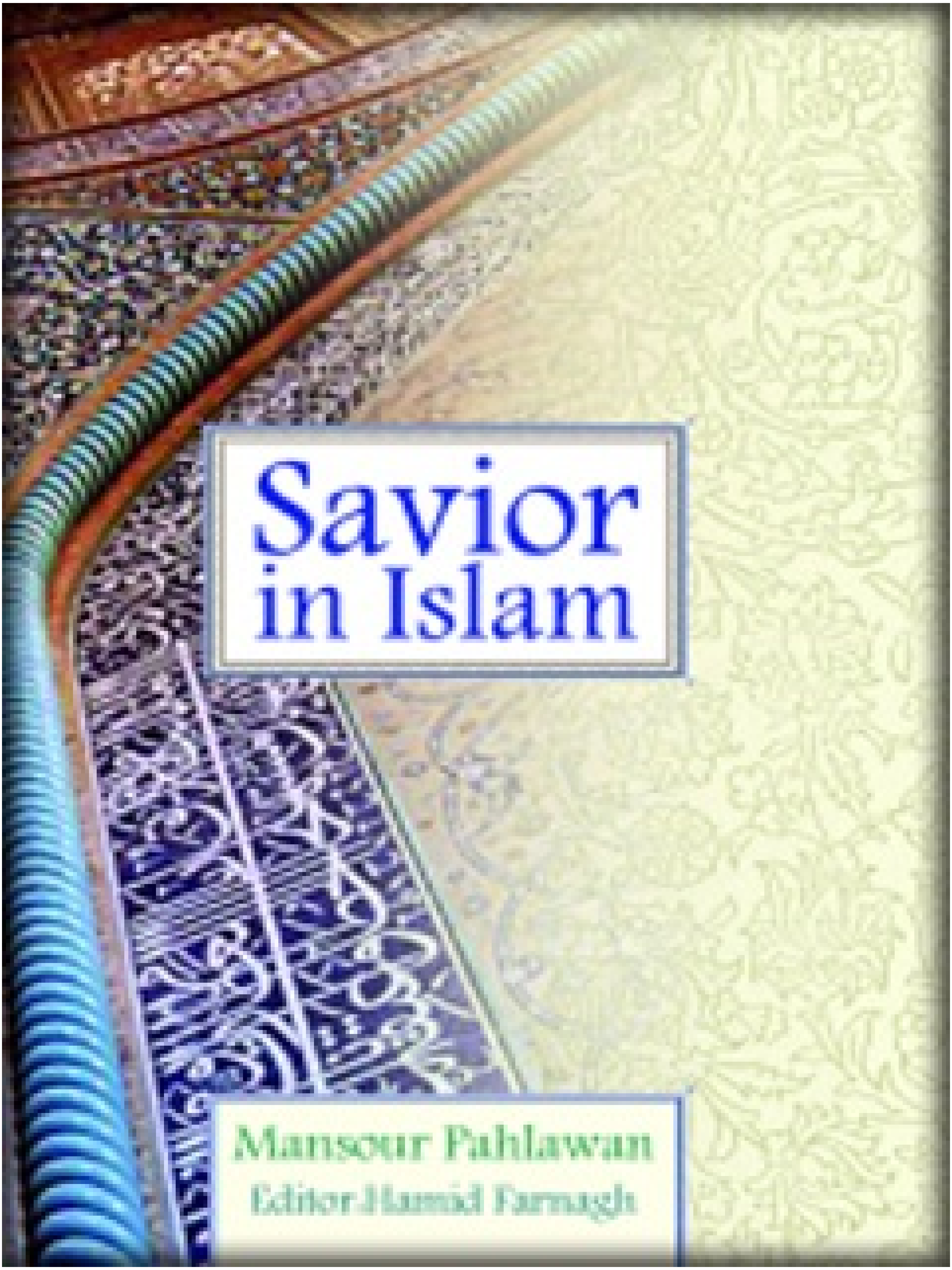

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in Islam
Mansour Pahlawan
Editor Hamid Farnagh

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THE SAVIOR IN ISLAM

Mansour Pahlavan

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FOREWORD

At the heart of every religion, there is a belief in the savior, the Rescuer of human communities. Such a belief is commonly accepted among the major religious doctrines. All the people believe that one day the Savior will come and rid the world of .all evil

The only difference among the religions, regarding this particular belief, is in the identity of the Savior. He has been introduced as a different person in every religion, and in the religion of Islam, with which we are currently concerned; he is non but .Imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.), who will one day emerge as the Savior of mankind

It is on the day of salvation that he will bring east and west of the world to justice, and by his powerful hand annihilate demons, infidelity, and disbelieving on that day, the authority of the Last Luminous Jewel of Allah will be established

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on the face of earth. It is he who will decide the end of the long struggle between truth and falsehood. His appearance will mean a victory for truth and the annihilation of .falsehood

He is the same person who, by the will of Allah, will overpower fragile doctrines, and .(.will pursue and accomplish the objectives of the Last Prophet, Muhammad (p.b.u.h

He will remove ignorance and discriminations from the world, and will establish equality instead; he will exploit the earth's resource, distribute them among the poor .and make them wealthy and happy

The outburst of enthusiasm and happiness will at that time cause tears to flow down the cheeks, and the happy and mournful eyes of the awaiting people will be filled with .light

Belief in the Savior is the most genuine and fundamental Islamic beliefs, which even a person with limited knowledge of Islam will surly accepted. Since it is necessary for every Muslim to know Imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.), it has been endeavored here to study a short history of this fundamental belief and present an introduction to the life of Imam .Mahdi. Let us hope that he would accept this meager collection as a humble gift

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PREFACE

The magnificent and auspicious celebration of the fifteenth of Sha'ban can be .observed every where

.Every place has been decorated

.In every place joyful and cheerful gathering can be seen

The enthusiasm and happiness of the Shi'ite on this auspicious day is apparent every .where

?Indeed, what day is revered like this day by people with such elation and glory

The fifteenth of Sha'ban is the day in which the shi'ites saw the fulfillment of the glad .tiding of the divine messengers

It is the day in which the good news of Islam, the Quran and the traditions (ahadith) .of the infallible Imams will take place

It is on his birthday that he will bring the east and west of the world to justice, and by .his powerful hand annihilate demons ('ifrit), infidelity and irreligiousness

On this day, the authority of the last Luminous Jewel of Allah will be established on

the face of earth. He it is who will decide the end of the long struggle between truth and falsehood. His appearance will mean a victory for truth and the annihilation of .falsehood

He is the same person who, by the will of Allah, will overpower fragile doctrines, and will pursue and accomplish the objectives of the Last Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.)(١)

He will remove ignorance and class-dis-crimination from the world and will establish equality instead; he will exploit the earth's resources, distribute them among the poor .and make them sufficient

The outburst of enthusiasm and happiness will at that time cause tears to flow down the cheeks of enthusiasts, and the lustrous and mournful eyes of the awaiting people .will be filled with light

Mahdism is the most genuine and fundamental Islamic beliefs, which even a person .with a limited knowledge of Islam will surely accept

Since it is obligatory for every Muslim to know the "Leader of the Age" – Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (a.s.)(٢), it has been endeavored here – though in brief – to study the short history of this fundamental belief and

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١- (s.a.w.): is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase Salla 'llahu 'alayhi wa alih (may Allah's peace and blessing be upon him and his progeny).

٢- (a.s.): is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase 'alay- hi/ha/himu's – salam (may peace be upon him / her / them).

present introduction to the life of Hujjat-e haqq (The Rightful Proof [of Allah]). We hope this meager "collection", as a humble gift, will be accepted by the "Solomon of the Age."

THE GOOD NEWS

There is no doubt that the holy Qur'an is the Book of Allah, and that all the Muslims of the world accept and obey its teachings and instructions.

When one opens this Book (Qur'an) and casts a glance at its verses, one will come to what seems to be a clear vista of the extraordinary, sensational and exciting future and end of the universe.

The holy Quran says that the ultimate mission of the holy Prophet of Islam is to make this holy religion prevail over all other religions of the world; and one day this holy aspiration will finally be fulfilled, as the holy Quran says:

HE IT IS WHO HAS SENT HIS MESSENGER (MUHAMMAD) WITH THE GUIDANCE AND THE RELIGION OF TRUTH, THAT HE MAY CAUSE IT TO PREVAIL OVER ALL RELIGIONS, HOWEVER MUCH THE IDOLATERS MAY BE AVERSE.(١)

The divine book of the last Messenger of Allah gives the glad tiding that rule over the earth

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١- ١- (QURAN (٩:٣٣)

:shall finally belong to the righteous and virtuous servant of All.۰ah

THE EARTH IS ALLAH\'S. HE GIVES IT FOR AN INHERITANCE TO WHICH HE WILL. (AND LO! THE SEQUEL IS FOR THOSE WHO KEEP THEIR DUTY (UNTO HIM).(۱

The earth, which will be full of corruption, destruction and ignorance like a lifeless body, will be revived with the glowing light of justice, as referred to in the holy (Quran.(۲

:We also read in the holy Quran

ALLAH HAS PROMISED SUCH OF YOU AS BELIEVE AND DO GOOD WORKS THAT HE WILL SURELY MAKE THEM SUCCEED (THE PRESENT RULERS) IN THE EARTH EVEN AS HE CAUSED THOSE WHO WERE BEFORE THEM TO SUCCEED (OTHERS) AND THAT HE WILL SURELY ESTABLISH FOR THEM RELIGION WHICH HE HAS APPROVED FOR THEM, AND WILL GIVE THEM IN EXCHANGE SAFETY AFTER THEIR FEAR. THEY (SERVE ME. THEY ASCRIBE NO THING AS PARTNER UNTO ME.(۳

:The Almighty Allah also says

FAIN WOULD THEY PUT OUT THE LIGHT OF ALLAH WITH THEIR MOUTH, BUT ALLAH WILL

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(QURAN (۷:۱۲۸ -۱ -۱

Know that Allah revives the earth after its death. (Quran, ۵۷:۱۷). According to the - ۲ interpretation (tafsir) of this verse, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) (said: "He (Allah) will revive the earth with justice after its death in tyanny."(Kafi

(QURAN (۲۴:۵۵ -۳

(PERFECT HIS LIGHT HOWEVER MUCH THE DISBELIEVERS ARE AVERSE.(۱

These are some short examples of the divine glad tidings mentioned in the holy Quran. By studying these and tens of other similar matters, it shall be perceived that the Islamic message will reach its complete fulfillment when these holy aspirations and desires have taken place. All fabricated and superstitious objectives will disappear, and then only Islam, the unique and true religion, will be the faith of the people in the east and west of the world. Injustice, oppression, and inequality shall vanish and instead justice and equality which is the law of the creation of the world will be established everywhere. The sovereignty of the divine caliphs will be established in all the corners of the world. The light of the guidance of Allah will shine .and the earth be long to the virtuous ones

Yes, the holy Quran gives the good news that a day will come when all Muslims of the .world shall wait enthusiastically for such a time

***

Neat to the holy Quran, the words of the holy Prophet and the honorable Imams are the most important and worthiest treasure of Islamic knowledge. For every Muslim, it is obligatory and essential to follow and obey the sayings of the holy Prophet and the holy Imams since

t:۱۱

(QURAN (۶۱:۸ -۱

(obeying their commands is particularly and clearly mentioned in the Book of Allah.(۱

In the sea of Jewels of Islamic traditions, glad tidings on the Government of Justice can be seen. Moreover, especial mention has been made regarding the "Divine .Revolution" and the divine leader who will fulfill this holy aspiration

:The holy Prophet of Islam said

Even when the entire duration of the world's existence has already been exhausted, " and one solitary day is left to embrace the eve of Doomsday, Allah will expand that day and make it swell to such a length of time as to accommodate the ultimate reign of a person out of my holy progeny who will be called by my name and my agnomen ('Abu' l-Qasim). He will then make the earth abound with peace and justice as it will (have been fraught with injustice and tyranny before him. "(۲

The context of this precious tradition reveals definite good news more than anything else, and informs the people of the Government of Justice, Achievement and Divine .Promises as mentioned in most of the Shi 'ite and Sunnite sources

:(.In another tradition, the Holy Prophet told Amir al-mu'minin 'Ali (a.s

There will be twelve Guides after me , the first of who are you, Ali, and the last one " will be

t:۱۲

(Quran (۴:۵۵ -۱ -۱

.Muntakhabu'l-athar, Lutfu'llah Safi Gulpaygani, sec.iii, chp. ۱ -۲ -۲

Qa'em, who by Almighty Allah's grace, will gain victory over the whole of the east and west of the world. "(۱)

The purified Imams reminded people, in several traditions, of the significance of the Divine Promise and Government of the twelfth Imam, and told them that waiting for the Great Savior is the most valuable deed, and that his followers and devotees are the best and the beloved people.

It will suffice here to quote a few of these traditions:

۱) When Imam Hasan Mujtaba (a.s.) held the seat of the caliphate, he fought the hypocrite Mu 'awiyah, who, with the assistance of his cunning minister, gradually deceived the companions of Imam Hasan (a.s.); and left the Imam alone. Hence, he was compelled to make a peace treaty with Mu 'awiyah in which he (Mu 'awiyah) was obliged to comply with some duties and to refrain from appointing a successor and fighting.

On some occasions, the Imam took the opportunity to point out to the people the Mu 'awiyah's errors and unjust acts. Meanwhile, some of ignorant people started criticizing the Imam that why he had accepted the peace treaty! Imam Hasan (a.s.) clarified for the people the meaning of the Imam and the leader, and the necessity of obeying every command of the Imam.

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۱- ibid, sec. i, chp. ۴ -۱.

:Then he explained about the Government of the twelfth Imam

Don't you know that every one of us (Imams) has the responsibility of giving " allegiance to the oppressors of his time, except the Qa'em, behind whom the Spirit of Allah (Jesus) will pray; Almighty Allah will keep secret his birth from some people and will conceal him from their sights? When he appears he will not be responsible to obey anyone. He is the ninth descendant of my brother Husain, the son of the captive princess. Almighty Allah will prolong his age during his occultation, and by His Perfect Power, h will appear as a young man of less than forty years so that all people will (know that Allah truly has power over all things. "(١

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) in reply to a question of his followers about his successors, (٢ :said

The Imam succeeding me is my son Musa, and the Awaited Imam is Muhammad ibn " (Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Musa. "(٢

:The same Imam is quoted as having said repeatedly that

Every group of people is waiting for a government, and we are waiting for our " (Government to be established at the End of the Time. "(٣

t:١۴

.ibid, sec. ii, chp. ۴ -١ -١

.ibid, sec. ii, chp. ٢١ -٢ -٢

.Amali, Shaikh Saduq, p. ۴٨٩ -٣ -٣

The seventh holy Imam Musa ibn Jafar (a.s.) in a reply to one of his companions who (٣
:asked him whether he was " Qaem bi'l-Haqq ", said

I am Qaem bi'l-Haqq, but that "Qaem" who will remove Allah's enemies from the " earth, and will fill it with justice and equity is my fifth descendant. Since he will fear for his own life, he will be in occultation for a long time during which a group of people will " .apostate, but there will also be a group who will be firm in their belief

He added: " Blessed are our followers (the Shi 'ites) who, during the time of occultation of the Imam of the Age, identify themselves with our Authority (Wilayah) and keep away from our enemies. They belong to us and we belong to them. They have accepted our leadership and we are pleased with their adherence. Therefore, blessed (are they. I swear Allah that they will be with us, in our rank, in Paradise. "(١

:Finally, the Eleventh Imam, Hasan Askari (a.s.) said (۴

I see that after me difference will appear among you concerning the next Imam. " Whoever accepts the Imams after the Prophet of Allah but denies my son is like a person who accepts all the prophets but denies Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), the Prophet of Allah. And whoever denies

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.Ithbatu'l-hudat, Shaikh Hurr al- 'Amili, vol. vi, p. ۴١٧ -١ -١

Muhammad) the Prophet of Allah is like one who has denied all the prophets of Allah.) For to obey the last of us is like obeying the first, and to deny the last of us is like denying the first. But beware! Verily, for my son there will be an occultation during which all people will fall into doubt except those whom Allah protects. "(۱)

The available traditions from the holy Prophet and the infallible Imams are so many in number as to make us well-informed on this important principle of faith. One can say that the most important, and the highest recorded number, of traditions are on the subject of Imamology (Imamate) in the Shi 'ite books of traditions.

The subject of the leadership of the twelfth Imam, his Government, and other related maters, comes next to the subject of the successorship of Imam 'Ali, Amir al-mu'minin (a.s.). There are hundreds of traditions recorded both in the Shi 'ite and Sunnite books.(۲) A large number of religious scholars from all Islamic sects have independently compiled books on this subject.(۳)

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۱ - ibid, p. ۴۲۷. ۲- Some of these traditions have been compiled in a valuable book – Muntakhab'l-athar fi'l-Imam ath-thani 'ashar, by Lutful'llah Safi Gulpaygani.

۲ - ۳- A short index of these books can be found in the book Najm ul-Thaqib, by Hajj Mirza Husayn Tabarsi.

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The years of Imams', Islamic leadership passed one after another along with tyranny of the rulers contemporary with them, till the leadership of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) came. This holy Imam lived in a difficult circumstance, appearing less frequently in the public gatherings. His beloved son who is the last Divine Proof, was hidden from the sight of strangers till the year ۲۶۰ A.H., when the rays of his being set, while the eyes of all people were fixed at the door of Imam Mahdi (a.s.).

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THE BIRTH

At dawn, on the ۱۵th sha 'ban ۲۵۵ A.H., the rays of the illuminating world shone with a powerful shaft of light in to a human form which became the source of existence for .the universe

Yes, finally, the Divine Promise was fulfilled and Imam Mahdi (a.s.) was born in spite of .the efforts of those who denied him

It is one of history's miracles that the Umayyids, 'Abbasids, and other opponents of .this holy Imam attempted to extinguish this divine light but met complete failure

The cruel and tyrannical Abbasid caliphs had heard that the twelfth Imam of the Shi 'ites would establish a just Government and would rule over the east and west of the world, and would destroy the foundations of injustice. Therefore, to counter this event, they tortured and shed the blood of the Shi 'ites. The history of the martyred (Shi 'ites can be referred in the books on this subject.(۱

In the year ۲۳۵ A.H., Mutawakkil, the 'Abbasid caliph, ordered the tenth Imam of Shia, Muhammad Hadi (a.s.) and his family to move from Medina to Samarra, his seat of ,government

t:۱۹

۱- Refer to Maqatil ul- talibiyyin, by 'Abu'l-Faraj Isfahani, which is the compendium of the names of the martyrs of the offspring of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) up to the year of its .compilation, i.e., ۳۱۳ A.H

(so that he could keep a close watch on the Imam of the Shi 'ites.(١

Similarly, Mu 'tamid, the 'Abbasid caliph, the Pharaoh of the time, was afraid of the son of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). He formed a group of detectives and midwives who had the mission of searching through the houses of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), so that if a (newly-born child were found, he could be killed immediately.(٢

The search to find and kill Imam Mahdi (a.s.) was intensified when Imam Hasan 'Askari (a.s.) left this world for the eternal one. It is because everyone knew that on that day the command of Divine Leadership (Imamate) was to be entrusted to the .twelfth Imam, and the universe would come under his authority

: Shaikh Saduq, the eminent scholar of the Shi 'ite world, writes in Kamalu'd-din

When the holy body of Imam Hasan 'Askari (a.s.) was buried and the people went " away, the caliph and his staff started their efforts to search for his son and inspected (the houses carefully. "(٣

: Shaikh Mofid, a distinguished Shi 'ite scholar, also wrote in Irshad

t:٢٠

.Ithabatu'l-wasiyyah, by Abu'l-Hassan Ali ibn Husain Mas 'udi, p.۴٣۵ -١
al-Kafi –Kitab al-Hujjah, Chpter on the birth of Abi Muhammad al-Hasan ibn 'Ali - ٢ .(a.s.), by Muhammad ibn Ya 'qub al-Kulani
.Kamal'd-din, by Shaikh Saduq, vol. I, p.١٠١ -٣

When Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) passed away, the caliph of that time, pursued his " son because the Shi 'ite Imamiyyah's belief was famous, and they knew that the Shias (were waiting his eminence. "(١)

Mu 'tazid, one of the tyrant 'Abbasid caliphs who ruled from ٢٧٩ to ٢٨٩ A.H., decided, all at once, to destroy the entire family of 'Askari when he heard that more than twenty years had passed since the birth of the son of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) and that he .was living in spite of the attempts of the preceding caliph to kill him

:One of Mu 'tazid's officers said

Mu 'tazid has ordered me and two other persons, each of us to mount a horse and to " proceed to Samarra' in full speed, without even stopping for prayer. He gave us the address of (Imam) Askari and instructed us to enter his

(house without permission, and to bring him the head of whoever we find there. "(٢)

As a matter of fact, they were unaware that the same power which had protected the :Imam from the former caliphs would give him protection from his evil, because

t:٢١

Irshad, by Shaikh Mofid, Chapter on the death of Abi Muhammad al-Hasan ibn 'Ali -١ (.(a.s

al-Ghaybah, by Shaikh Tusi, p. ١۶٠; Shawahidu'n-nubuwwah, by 'Abdu'l Rahamn -٢ .Jami Hanafi

ALLAH DISDAINS (NOTHING) SAVE THAT HE SHALL PERFECT HIS LIGHT, HOWEVER (MUCH THE DISBELIEVERS ARE AVERSE.(١

Indeed what an immature thought and foolish act it was! If the Divine Will bears on some matter can a person revolt against it and combat it? Is it possible that definite Divine promises my not be accomplished? Or is it possible that the reins of oppressive ?imposters who fight against the Divine decree will not cut

Is it not more amazing that peerless, Almighty Allah has shown His power many times before, so that after that all men should know that if He wishes to give His chosen servant government and sovereignty and to abolish infidelity and polytheism through .him, then no one who can disrupt His will

.Fortunately, this sensational story is mentioned in the holy Quran

Pharaoh, the great emperor of Egypt, who had great power and pride, claimed divinity for himself. He determined to kill all the youth and boy children of Isra'el, as a result of .what he had heard about a son being born who would destroy his empire and divinity

He shed the blood of innocents, and banished many persons to unknown regions; but sees how Almighty Allah restored His Prophet and how the Divine Will worked to :protect the life of Moses and destroy Pharaoh

t:٢٢

(QURAN (٩:٣٢ -١

AND WE REVEALED TO THE MOTHER OF MūSā, SAYING, "GIVE HIM SUCK; AND IF YOU FEAR FOR HIM, LAUNCH ON THE RIVER; AND FEAR NOT, NOR GRIEVE; FOR WE WILL RETURN HIM TO YOU AND MAKE HIM ONE OF THE MESSENGERS." AND TOOK HIM UP PHARAOH\'S PEOPLE, THAT HE MIGHT BE TO THEM AN ENEMY AND A (CAUSE OF THEIR) GRIEF, (FOR) VERILY PHARAOH AND HāMāN AND THEIR HOSTS WERE SINNERS...SO WE DID RESTORE HIM TO HIS MOTHER THAT HER AGE MIGHT BE REFRESHED AND THAT SHE MIGHT KNOW THAT THE PROMISE OF ALLAH IS (ALWAYS) TRUE, BUT MOST OF THEM KNOW NOT.(١)

Allah will protect His Proof (Hujjat) and will fulfill His promises and glad tidings .because His decision is based on its execution, although most people do not know it

Would Allah wish to save the life of Prophet Mūsā (a.s.), who was only a messenger to a certain nation and tribe, and yield the Imam Mahdi (Imam-e Zaman) into the hands ?of Mu 'tamid and Mu 'tazid

Wuld Allah protect the life of Mūsā (a.s.) while he was in the middle of the roaring waves of a river, and give no security to the Imam of Age who was in the house of his ?(.father, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s

t:٢٣

(QURAN: (٢٨:٧-١٣ -١

Would he sustaining Allah of the Prophet Abraham (whose story is mentioned in the Quran)(1) protect him in the middle of the flaming fire, but allow the Last Pearl of the Prophet's progeny to be a victim of the lust and anger of the 'Abbasid caliphs?

Really, how to false thinkers and feebleminded people judge?

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At dawn, on the middle day of Sha 'ban in the year 255 A.H., Imam Askari (a.s.) beheld the heavenly, shining face of his son who was to fulfill all Divine promises and glad tidings.

Not more than three days had passed after his birth when the eleventh Imam took the holy child to his companions and told them:

"After me this will be your master of authority and my successor, and he is the 'Support' (Qaim) for whose appearance all people will wait; when the earth is full of injustice and tyranny, he will fill it with peace and justice."(2)

At the time of his son's birth, the eleventh Imam told some of his companions:

t:24

1- We said: "O' fire, be coolness and peace for Ibrahim. (Quran, 21:69)

2- Yanabi 'u'l-mawaddah, by Sulayman ibn Ibrahim Qanduzi Hanafi, P. 60.

Oppressors were plotting to kill me so that my son would not be born, but now see "
(how great is the power of the All-powerful God. "(١

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), ordered ten thousand pounds (١٠٠٠٠ lbs.) of bread and meet to be distributed among the Hashemid to mark the happy and auspicious birthday. 'Othman ibn Sa 'id was charged with this important work and he undertook in the best (way.(٢

.From the very beginning, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) hide his son from stangers

:Shaikh Mofid has given the story from below

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) prepared a true government for his son. He Kept secret " the birth of his son and other related matters, because his eminence was living in difficult time when the caliphs were intensively searching for his son and were keeping a close eye on the affairs of Imam Askari. This is because the Shia belief about Imam Mahdi (a.s.) had become so current that they were waiting for his eminence. Hence, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) did not show his son, and, therefore, the (enemies could not recognize Imam Mahdi (a.s.) after the demise of his father. "(٣

t:٢٥

(.as-Seyed ibn Tawus quoting from Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s -١

.Kamalu'd-din, by Shaikh Saduq, vol. ii, p. ١٠۴ -٢

Irshad, by ash-Shaikh Mofid, chapter on the death of Abi Muhammad Hasan ibn 'Ali -٣ .(.(a.s

Although the affairs of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) were unknown to his enemies and opponents, the sincere Shia gathered the news of this important event.

Some of them were informed by Imam Askari (a.s.) though letters. One of the sincere Shias Ahamad ibn Is'haq, recived a letter from the Imam written in his own handwriting, was saying:

" ...my son is born. Therefore, keep secret the news of it from people, and inform only your near relatives and particular friends... "(١)

Some of the Shi 'ites used to pay private visits to Imam Askari (a.s.) who would take them to the presence of the Imam Mahdi (a.s.).

Abu Amri Ahwazi reported:

" Abu Muhammad (Imam Hasan Askari) showed me his son (the twelfth Imam) and told

me, 'this is your Master (Sahib). "(٢)

Some other Shi 'ites used to visit Imam Askari (a.s.) in a group, and if the Imam trusted in them that they would faithfully keep their visit secret, he would show them his beloved son.

Mu 'awiyah ibn Hkim, Muhammad ibn Ayyub and Muhammad ibn 'Uthman Amri has narrated that:

١- ١- Kamalu'd-din, by Shaikh Saduq, vol. ii, p. ١٠۴.

٢- Irshad, by ash-Shaikh Mofid, chapter on the twelfth Imam.

We were forty persons who gathered at the house of Imam Hasan, and then he " showed us his son and said, 'this is your Imam and my successor! You should obey (him after me and should not oppose him lest you perish. "(۱

Anyhow, from the time of the birth of twelfth "moon" till his Imamate, the Shi 'ites .used to go to the eleventh Imam and congratulate him

:Hasan ibn Hasan Alawi has said

I went to see Imam Hasan (Askari) in Samarra' and congratulated him on the birth of " (his son. "(۲

:And 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas Alawi also said

I visited Imam Askari (a.s.) in Samarra' and congratulate him on the birth of his son. " ("(۳

In this manner was the Imam of the Age (Imam-e Zaman) born and kept hidden from the reach of strangers. On some occasions only the virtuous Shi 'ites were allowed to see him, until the year ۲۶۰ A.h., when the eleventh Imam expired, and by Divine decree the office of Divine Leadership (Imamate) vested in the Master of the .(Authority (Sahibu'l-Amr

t:۲۷

.Kamalu'd-din, by Shaikh Saduq, vol. ii, p. ۱۰۹ -۱
.Ithabatu' l-hudat, by Shaikh Hurr Amili, vol. vi, p. ۴۳۳ -۲
.ibi۸d., vol. vii, p.۲۰ -۳

THE MINOR OCCULTATION

When Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) died, the office of Divine leadership (Imamate) was transferred to the Last Luminous, Pearl of the Household of the holy Prophet, Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Although eminence did not appear amongst the people, some persons, in whom he had trust and confidence, were allowed to visit him and present him the problems and questions of the Shi 'ites. And they communicated to people the .guidance of the Imam

With regards to faith, confidence, and virtue, they were distinguished persons among the Muslims. They were mediators between the Imam and the people. And in due .time they conveyed his guidance to the people

By studying the character and perception of the belief and piety of those individuals, not only the greatness of their personalities becomes clear to us, but we become more familiar with the Imam of the Age, because, among the sayings of these distinguished, trustworthy and reliable companions of the holy Imams, one finds the .signs of the greatness of Imam Mahdi

Among the companions of Imam-e Zaman , four became his most confidential deputies who acted as mediators between the Imam and people, and they are known .(as the Nowwab arba 'ah (the four deputies

In order to know more about the dignity and greatness of their positions, we give :below a brief description of each one of them

:Othman ibn Saeid Amri' (١

This honorable figure was not only a deputy of Imam-e Zaman , but he was also a representative (wakil) of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.). he setteled and organized many :affairs of the Shi 'ites. The tenth Imam (Hadi –a.s.) said to his followers regarding him

Abu Amri is a reliable and trustworthy person. Whatever he says to you he says so " (on my behalf, and whatever he does on my behalf." (١)

This representation continued till ٢٥۴ A.H. when Imam Hadi (a.s.) died. Then, the eleventh Imam is reported to have praised the character of Abu Amri as having his :high esteem in his address to his Shi 'ites, saying

This Abu Amri is a reliable and trustworthy person. He had the confidence of the " preceding Imam, and has also my confidence in my lifetime and after my death. Whatever he says to you, is on my behalf, and whatever he does he does on my (behalf. "(٢)

Likewise, with this certificate of admiration, he became the deputy of the twelfth .(.Imam after the demise of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s

t:٣٠

.al-Ghaybah, by Sheikh Toosi, p. ٢١۵ -١

.ibid., p. ٢١۵ -٢

On the death of Abu Amri, the Imam Mahdi (Sahibu'z-Zaman) sent condolences to his son, Muhammad ibn Othman saying:

"Verily we belong to Allah and to Him shall we return. We submit to his command and are pleased with His decree. Your father has lived in good fortune and has died with dignity. May Allah's mercy be upon him, he has joined his friends and masters. He was always endeavouring to search for whatever would bring him near to Allah and His friends. May Allah strengthen his countenance." (1)

2) Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Othman:

This man was the second special deputy of Imam-e Zaman. He was also a deputy of the eleventh Imam, about whom the letter said:

"The greatness of his dignity and the exaltation of his status among the Shi 'ites is so famous that there is no need to explain or dispute it." (2)

Regarding him and his father, 'Othman ibn Saeid, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) said to one of his companions:

"Amri and his son are both trustworthy. Whatever they do they do on my behalf, and whatever they say to you, the say so on my behalf. Therefore, listen to their words and obey them,

t:31

1- Tarikhu'l-ghaybatu sughrah, by Muhammad Sadr, p. 401.

2- Tanqihu'l-maqal, by Mamaqani, vol. iii, p. 149.

(because both of them are reliable and trustworthy to us. "(۱

:And Imam-e Zaman himself said about him

(He is my confident, and his letter is of the same value as mine. "(۲ "

:Abu'l- Qasim Husain ibn Rouh Nawbakhti (۳

Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Othman, the second deputy of Imam-e Zaman , said about :him

This Husain ibn Rouh ibn Abu Bahr Nawbakhti is my successor. He is a reliable and " trustworthy envoy and deputy between you and the Sahibu'l-Amr (the master of the Authority). Therefore, in your affairs and important tasks refer to him and trust him. I (was given this task; and I have announced it. "(۳

:Shaikh Toosi (may Allah's mercy be upon him) said about him

Abu'l-Qasim Husain ibn Rouh was regarded by his friends and opponents, as the " (most learned man among the people. "(۴

The integrity of Husain ibn Rouh's deputyship was acknowledged by his opponents too. Shalmaghni, who was one of the pseudo-claimants to the deputyship, had to confess his falsity when Imam-e Zaman ordered Husain ibn Rouh to expose him. He :(Shalmaghani) said

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.Ghaybah, by Shaikh Toosi, p. ۲۱۹ -۱

.ibidi., p. ۲۲۰ -۲

.Trikhu'l-ghaybatu sughrah, by Muhammad Sadr, p. ۴۰۷ -۳

.Ghaybah, by Shaikh Toosi, p. ۲۳۶ -۴

it is not right between me and Allah to say anything in the affair of Husain ibn Rouh " other than the trust. Although his crime towards me is a big one, yet this man was appointed by Imam-e Zaman for the task. The Shia should not turn away from him. (")۱)

:Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad Simmori (۴

This honorable person was the last especial deputy of the holy Imam-e Zaman. His .death, concided with the ۱۵th of Sha 'abn ۳۲۹ A.H

Husain ibn Rouh had introduced him as the deputy of the Imam. The last letter of Imam-e Zaman to the four especial deputies was addressed to his honorable man. In this order the Imam announced the death of 'Ali ibn Muhammad ' and the end of the :deputation

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. You are going to die in six days, " May Allah grant patience to your brothers in faith on your departure. So, be prepared, but appoint no one in your place, because from the day of your death the period of my major occultation (ghaybatu'l-kubra) will begin. Henceforth; no one will see me, unless and until Allah makes me appear. My reappearance will take place after a very long time when people will have grown tired

t:۳۳

Biharu'l-anwar, by Allamah Majlisi, Book on the Occultation, chp. ۲۱, as quoted from -۱ .Ghaybah of Shalmaghani

of waiting and those who weak in their faith will say: 'What! Is he still alive?' When men will become cruel and inconsiderate, and the world will be full of injustice and violence. Very soon some men will claim to have seen me. Beware! Anyone who makes such a claim before the coming out of Sofyani and the heaven sound is a liar and an imposter. There is neither might nor strength except of Allah, the Magnificent. ("(۱)

As can be seen from this, it is the last order, in which the door of special deputation is closed by the death of 'Ali ibn Muhammad; hence, anyone who claims to be a mediator, or claims that the Imam can be seen, is a liar. In the period of the major occultation no-one has made the claim that he has been in the presence of the holy .Imam-e Zaman

The people would not accept the deputation of the four special deputies unless they had been shown the miracles of the Sahib'l-Amr to verify their trustfulness and accuracy, although they acknowledged them as reliable and trustworthy and had not (the smallest doubt in their piety, faith, and knowledge.(۲)

The special deputies presented the problems and questions of the Shia scholars, and the Imam answered those that were necessary in letter form, and delivered them .through the same deputies

t:۳۴

.Ghaybah, by Shaikh Toosi, pp.۲۴۲ and ۲۴۳ -۱ -۱

Kharayij, by Qutbu'd-Din Rewandi quoting from Biharu'l-anwar of Allamah Majlisi, -۲ .chp. ۱۳ and ۲۱

In these letters, the most important and difficult problems on different subjects were .cleared up

One of those problems was a question as to what would be the responsibility of the Shi'ites who would be faced with new events during the period of occultation, and ?what should they do to face them

In the letter issued by Imam-e Zaman to the celebrated and distinguished Shia, Is'haq ibn Ya'qub, he recounted duties, methods, and guidance for the Shi'ites in the period of occultation. This direction was carried out for many centuries, and it is one of the .proofs of the comprehensiveness ands eternity of Islamic rule

In one of the letters to Imam-e Zaman which he sent through the second special deputy of the Imam, Is'haq ibn Ya'qub asked him some different questions, among which was a question which is the subject of our discussion. The Imam said that in such new affairs one must refer to those who really understand their (Imams') :traditions and have truly related them

But as for the problems which will occur in the future, you should refer to the" narrators of our traditions for their verdicts, as they are my proofs on you, and I am Allah's proof (Hujjatu'llah) on them."(۱)

Other letters of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) were issued during the minor occultation (ghaybatul

t:۳۵

.Kashfu'l-ghummah, vol. iii; al-Manaqib, sec. iii, p. ۴۵۶ -۱

sughra), each one of them solved difficulties and gave instruction in the boundless sea of wisdom. All these letters were conveyed through the holy Imam's special .deputy to the desirous seekers

Yes, the four deputies, who were at the highest level of faith and confidence for many years, were the blessed mediators between the Imam and the people till in the year ۳۲۹ A.H. when this deputation was closed, and on the basis of the Divine Will, the major occultation of Imam-e Zaman commenced. This was the very occultation which was prophesied a long time before by the holy Prophet and the Shia Imams; and Muslims keep patient in this period of test, till by the order of Almighty Allah, the Awaited Imam .will appear and the Divine Aim will reach its fulfillment

t:۳۶

THE MAJOR OCCULTATION

After the year ٣٢٩ A.H., when the major occultation commenced, the special deputation of Imam-e Zaman terminated. If any body claims during the major occultation to be a mediator and a deputy, then, according to the declaration of .Imam-e Zaman , that claimer is a liar

In the holy Imams' traditions, the purpose of the Imam's going into occultation is compared to the sun being behind the clouds yet being the source of vitality and life for living creatures. Likewise, while the Imam is behind the curtain of occultation, he is .still a source of the existence and remaining of the world

During the major occultation, many people have visited Imam Mahdi (a.s.), but non of them have claimed to be able to see him again or to represent him; because only the four special deputies (Nawwab khass) of the Imam had the honor of meeting the .holy Imam whenever they wished

t:٣٧

١- Muntakhabu'l-athar, by Lutfu'llah Safi Gulpayigani, sec. ii, chp. ٢٩. "He asked (Imam) Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.): 'How will people benefit from the Hidden Proof in the occultation?' He replied: 'they will drive benefit in the same manner as they drive benefit when the ".sun is behind clouds

Some of the names of these fortunate persons who have had the honor of meeting (the Imam are mentioned in the authentic books.(١

Among these personalities are –'Allamah Hilli – a famous scholar and a rhetorician of the Islamic world; Muqaddas Ardibili – the most pious person and most acknowledgeable jurist of his time; Seyed ibn Tawus – a pious and a virtuous narrator; seyed Bahru'l-Olum – a distinguished scholar; and other great and notable .figures in Islam

They saw the "sun" (Imam) with their own eyes, and their hearts were filled with the faith of Imamu'l-'Asr (the Imam of the time), and with sympathetic explanations they .informed others about their meeting with him

As an example, we can examine part of the will of Seyed ibn Tawus which he wrote to his son in the year ۶۵۰ A.H. in this own words he explained to his son, implying the truth :of the matter without claiming to have perceived him

O' my son! If success in discovering the truth and mysteries has been granted to " you, then I will inform you regarding Imam Mahdi (a.s.) in such away that you will never have any doubt, and you will not need intellectual proofs and recorded traditions; because His Eminence is certainly alive and exists, and as long as Merciful Allah does not allow him to plan events, he is excused from revealing and declaring his

t:۳۸

.Refer to Najm thaqib, by Hajj Mirza Husain Tabrasi Nuri, chp. ٧ -١

workings. And this matter is not exclusively to him, but was usual among many prophets and their successors. Then you must know with confidence and consider it as your faith and creed. And know that the insight of your father into His Eminence is (brighter than his knowledge of the world ."(۱)

The honor of seeing Imam-e Zaman was not exclusive to some special Shi 'ites scholars only, but many devout and common people have also had this honor. We are completely amazed when we see people who at one time used to commit sinful and indecent acts, but who after their repentance, and after having their hearts filled with love for Imam-e Zaman , also jad an opportunity to meet him, and among them were our Sunni brothers. One of the Sunni brothers was Hasan Iraqi who lived a life of immorality when he was young. One day, he suddenly awoke from the slumber of heedlessness and asked himself, "Was I created to commit evil deeds?" Then he left the immoral place he was in and went directly to the mosque. By chance, a preacher there was speaking about Imam Mahdi (a.s.). 'Iraqi's fully disturbed soul turned into a heart flaming with enthusiastic love of the Imam. Henceforth, he invoked Allah after every prayer to give him the opportunity to see the Living Imam (Baqiyyatu'llah). Finally, his requests were

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۱- Kashfu'l-Hujjah or Barnam-e sa "adat, Seyed ibn Tawus, sec. lxxv, p. ۷۴.

answered and within seven days and nights he learned the path of salvation in his .presence

Thereafter, he became known as one of the great scholars of Islam. 'Abu'l-Wahhab Sha'rani, one of the great Sunni scholars, and t۵he original narrator of this anecdote, (used to call him by the title, " My great master Shaikh Iraqi. "(۱

During the major occultation, letters were issued by His Eminence to individuals and great scholars of Islam. In those letters new difficult problems were solved, and necessary guides were given. Among these letters there was one issued in the year ۴۱۰ A.H. praising a distinguished scholar of Islam, Muhmmad ibn Muhammad ibn .Nu'man, alias Shaikh Mofid

Shaikh Mofid has enjoyed a special rank for his acknowledge and devoutness and that letter was an acknowledgement of his efforts and worthy services. Even after the .passing of many centuries, people still admire him with honor and respect

The importance of this letter indicates the awareness of the Imam about the mistakes and immoral actions of some of the Shi'ites, and at the same time it gives :hope about his existence

We are well informed of all your affairs and none of them is hidden from us. We are " aware of the problems which have occupied you from the time when you found pleasure and kept committing indecent deeds which your

t:۴۰

.Kashfu'l-astar, by Hajj Mirza Husain Tabarsi Nuri, sec. I, p. ۱۸ -۱

predecessors had avoided. We are aware from the time when your predecessors broke the covenant made with them, as if they knew not about it. We will not neglected or forget you, lest calamity and troubles would fall on you, and enemies have the opportunity to overpower you. Therefore, remember Allah and fear Him. "(۱)

The valuable writings of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) during the major occultation are the most important guidance fro his followers. These writings can be referred to in the authentic Shia books.(۲)

However, we are now passing through a very sensitive period in the major occultation.

In Islamic traditions, when the subject of the occultation of the twelfth Imam is discussed, reference is made to the complex nature of this Divine test. In this Divine test, the sincere and faithful Shias are distinguished from others "and become as pure as pure gold."(۳)

In Islamic traditions, a comparison is made between the sincere faith of the Shias and the faith of a few flowers of the Prophet Nuh (Noah), who remained faithful despite their very difficult test, and by boarding the ark with Prophet Noah, was saved from the Deluge.

t:۴۱

۱- Biharu'l-anwar, by Allamah Majlisi, vol. liii, p. ۱۷۵.

۲- Kamalu'd-din, by Shaikh Saduq, chp. ۴۹; Biharu'l-anwar, by Allamah Majlesi, vol. xiii, chp. ۳۶; Ihtijaj, by Tabarsi, vol. ii.

۳- ۳- Ghaybah, by Nu'mani, p. ۱۰۷.

Therefore, blessed are those who have passed this Divine test. We hope to be .among their rank

THE SHIA DURING THE IMAM\'S OCCULTATION

?Now what is the duty of Shia? What responsibilities does he have

?(.Truly, are we reckoned among the real followers of Imam Mahdi (a.s

If we study the lives of the devout Shias (followers) of the holy Imams before the twelfth Imam, and consider their sacrifices without the slightest hesitation, we shall, .at once, awake from our neglectful slumber and realize our weakness and guilt

Were not Salman Farsi, Abu Dharr Ghifari, Ammar ibn Yasir, and Malik Ashtar the contemporary followers of Imam 'Ali (a.s.), are we too the followers of the Imam of ?our Age

Was not Maytham Tammar, who did not cease to praise 'Ali, a followers of His Eminence 'Ali, and are we too, who are passing with the Imam of our Age through a ?strange period, his followers

Were not the martyrs of Karbala', who with love strived in defending the Imam of their time, Husain (a.s.), and were martyred, and are

we too, who refuse to give our wealth, lives and other means in the way of Imam of ?our time, his followers

Is a person like Hisham ibn Hakam, who in his extraordinary and valuable debates crushed and defamed the opponents of the Divine Leadership (Imamate) in such a way that he was called the "assistant of the Imam" by Imam Sadiq (a.s.), a Shia? And are we too, who are sluggish in fulfilling our foremost duty to recognize the Imam of ?our time, Shia

From what we read of the glad tidings in the Qur'an and the traditions of the holy Prophet and the infallible Imams, the Imam of the Age (Imam-e Zaman) has special responsibilities which other Imams did not have. Imam-e Zaman will establish a Universal Government. He will fill the earth with righteousness and justice. He will exploit the earth's treasures and natural resources. He will improve and develop the land, and in this way people's awareness and understanding will improve.(۱)

Therefore, do not the followers of His Eminence have a very particular duty? Should not the Shia Endeavour to obtain the competence and merit of being his special ?companions when he reappears by Divine Command

Therefore, let us see what our duties are, and how we should observe them. .Undoubtedly, our first duty is to become acquainted with him

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۱- Muntakhabu'l-athar, by Lutfu'llah Safi Golpaygani, sec. vii.

Recognizing Imam-e Zaman is so important and essential that in the holy Prophet's :traditions we read

He who dies without recognizing the Imam of his age is like one who had died during " (the Jahiliyyah (the pagan era before the advent of Islam). "(۱)

To die during the Jahiliyyah means a death far from Islam and faith. And it is obvious that one who dies without recognizing the Imam of his age is counted in the group of .the atheists

In another tradition, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) is quoted as having said on the :same subject

One who dies without having (accepted) the Imam, it is as if he died in the Jahiliyyah, " (and people are not exempted from recognizing their Imam. "(۲)

Therefore, we must endeavour to recognize Imam-e Zaman for the shake of Islam and our faith, and so that we may be reckoned among those who have gained .salvation and among the faithful

Another duty of the shi 'ites during the major occultation, is the question of being ready for the Savior. Hence, the first step for salvation is to recognize the Imam of the age; and the second step is to be prepared for the

t:۴۴

.Ilzam nasib fi ithbat Hujjah al-Gha'ib, by Shaikh 'Ali Yazdi Ha'iri, p. ۵ -۱

.Muntakhabu'l-athar, sec.x, chp. ۵ -۲

.establishment of just Government by His Eminence

One who is waiting and preparing himself for the appearance of the Imam must have the characters and merits of the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.s.), and should :sacrifice his life and wealth in his way. For this reason, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said

One who waits for our commands is like a person who sacrifices his own blood in the " (way of Allah. "(١

Yes, he who is really ready for the Imamu'l-'Asr (the Imam of the period) becomes like .a martyr in the way of Allah

In another tradition, the same Imam told some of his followers about the person who :is really waiting for the Imam-e Zaman , saying

One who dies while expecting the Government of Qaem is like one who is in the " " .(.presence of Qaem (Imam Mahdi, a.s

:After a pause he added

" .Even he is like one who has been struck with a sword while accompanying him "

:Then he insisted further by adding

Nay, by Allah! He is like one who has been martyred in the presence of the " (Messenger of Allah. " (٢

Are we reckoned among those who are expecting His Eminence? Are we at least waiting for the Divine Promise in the same manner as we

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.Kamalu'd-din, by Shaikh Saduq, p.۳۳۶ -١

.Biharu'l-anwar, by Allamah Majlesi, vol. lii, p. ١٢۶ -٢

?wait for the return of our loved ones from a journey

In another tradition, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) narrated the virtues of the companions of :(.Imam Mahdi (a.s

If one takes pleasure in being among the companions of Qa'em, then he must wait " for him and must act with good behavior and modestly. If he dies before the appearance of Qa'em, then he will be rewarded like one who has followed him. Then act diligently, and await, that this effort and awaiting will give you delight, O' you who (have found salvation. "(۱

So, one who is awaiting and has not ceased from good and worthy deeds should earnestly endeavour to be in an excellent and worthy position, in such a way that .Allah may shower His blessing on him

So, we should pray to Allah that He may include us among those who are waiting for the Imam of the age, and that our acts and conduct may also symbolize the truth of our claim. First, we should try to know the Imam; and then we should guide others. We should gain the virtues of the companions of Imam Mahdi (a.s.), and should always be in the expectation of his appearance. Henceforth, we will be able to .sacrifice our worthless souls and thus to make them worthy

t:۴۶

.Ghaybah, by Muhamad ibn Ibrahim ibn Jafar Nu 'mani, p. ۱۰۶ -۱

.Shias should have a devout link with His Eminence during the occultation

.Their hearts and souls should be filled with love and affection for him

Their thoughts should be devoted to his service and their desire should be to meet .him

Their prayers should be to ask for the blessing of Allah, to be showered on him, and .their supplication should be for salvation and reappearance of their Imam

Their existence should be one welded and fused unit, and their life should blaze with .love for him

t:۴۷

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?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

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Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

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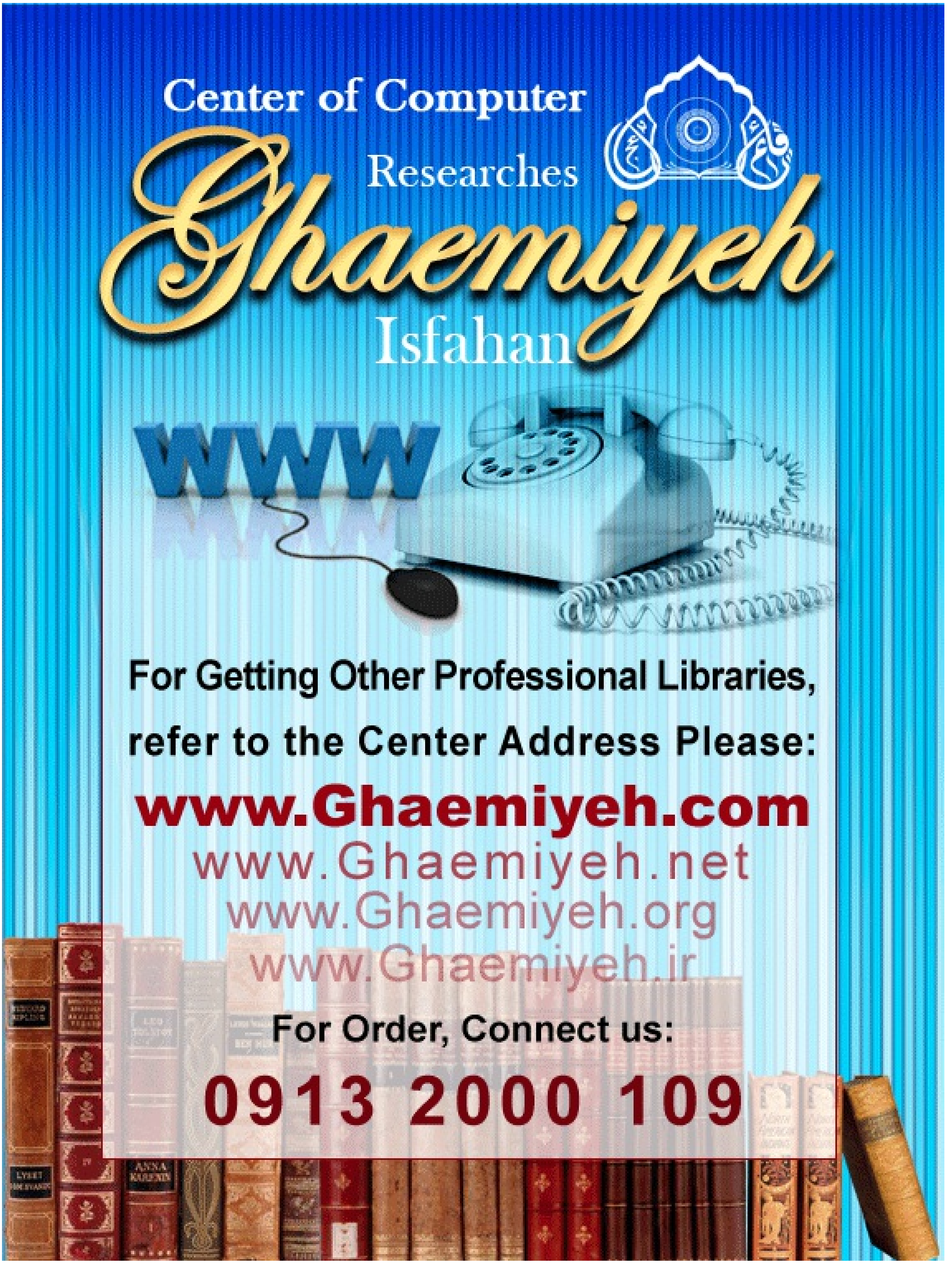
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:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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